



Birds of the Northeast

American Robin



American Robins are a fixture on suburban lawns, but these familiar birds can also be found in forests. They traipse along grassy surfaces and kick through leaf-litter looking for insects. They are also becoming more common at birdfeeders, preferring suet, mealworms, shelled sunflower seeds, and raisins. American Robins love berries, and having a berry-producing tree or shrub in your backyard that is native to your area is a great way to attract these birds so you can enjoy their cheerful song.

Eastern Bluebird

Look for the charming Eastern Bluebird on telephone wires or perched on nest boxes in the open farm country, on golf courses, and in meadows. Males are brilliantly blue with rusty coloring on the chest; females are grayer but have beautiful blue coloring on the wings and tail. They might be spotted quickly dropping to the ground abruptly in order to snatch up insects. Bluebirds, like Robins, are becoming more common at birdfeeders. If space allows, a nest box might encourage visits to your backyard.



Red-eyed Vireo



The Red-eyed Vireo can be heard in forested areas all day through late summer. Their song is a series of short phrases that sounds like someone saying, "Here I am, see me? Over here, in the tree, way up high..." They can be difficult to spot high up in the treetops, but their song gives them away. The bright white stripe above their eye helps distinguish them from other species, like Warbling Vireos. Young Red-eyed Vireos in fall have brown eyes, which have turned red by the time they return in the spring.

Black-capped Chickadee

Naturally curious and quick to investigate anything new in their territory, Black-capped Chickadees are frequent visitors at feeders and are comfortable near humans. Their "chickadee-dee-dee" call can be heard in almost any area with trees. Their black cap and bib, buffy sides, and gray wings make them nearly identical to their southern cousins, the Carolina Chickadee. Their ranges overlap a bit in the Northeast. To attract Black-capped Chickadees to your yard, hang feeders with suet, sunflower seeds, and peanuts.



Wood Thrush



Listen for the flute-like call of the Wood Thrush, a bird more often heard than seen in densely forested areas of the Northeast. Wood Thrushes usually spotted hopping on the forest floor, flipping over leaves in search of snails or insects. Wood Thrushes are a bright rusty cinnamon color with a bold, polka-dotted chest. They are not typical visitors at birdfeeders, but they may enjoy a refreshing drink or a quick splash in a birdbath in your backyard.



Birds of the Southeast

Painted Bunting



There's no mistaking the beautifully hued Painted Bunting! Males are boldly patterned and multicolored, while females are uniformly greenish-yellow with a pale eye-ring. Find Painted Buntings in semi-open habitat like wooded areas between fields, roadsides with brushy vegetation, and even abandoned farms. These migratory birds winter in southern Mexico and Central America, journeying annually to the southern U.S. to breed. Prolific seed eaters, Painted Buntings will visit well-stocked feeders near low, shrubby vegetation.

Great Egret

Great Egrets are elegant all-white birds that frequent ponds and marshes where they hunt by staying very still and stalking prey in shallow water. They can be found in both freshwater and saltwater habitats. Males and females both are long and slender with white plumage, bright yellow bills, and dark legs. Their long neck is often held in the shape of an "S" when standing. During the breeding season, Great Egrets nest in large colonies in trees near water, often with other species.



Anhinga



The Anhinga is sometimes mistaken for a cormorant... and for a snake! Anhingas swim through lakes keeping their head above water as they look for fish — a very serpentine posture. On land, they stretch out their wings and necks to sun themselves and drip-dry because, unlike many waterbirds, Anhingas are not waterproof. Look for them near shallow freshwater areas like marshes and swamps, or flying and riding thermals like a hawk. They are both excellent swimmers and flyers!

Red-shouldered Hawk

You might hear a Red-shouldered Hawk before you see it. Visit a swampy forest or woodland near a river and listen for their loud, crying call. But, don't be surprised if you hear one in your backyard! Males and females both have an orange-brown chest and belly, black-and-white checkered wings that show a light crescent pattern when outstretched, and dramatic white bars along the tail. They hunt from perches along ponds and streams and can be spotted circling and soaring in the skies, especially during nesting season.



Northern Mockingbird



If you hear an abundance of different bird songs that all seem to be coming from one spot, chances are it's a Northern Mockingbird! These intelligent birds can learn up to 200 songs and often sings multiple songs at once, even at night. Northern Mockingbirds live in places like towns and suburbs where they have access to open, grassy areas as well as fruiting trees and bushes. Planting native berry-producing plants can help attract them to your backyard.



Birds of the Midwest

Eastern Meadowlark



Look and listen for the sweet singing Eastern Meadowlark in areas with large, rolling grasslands and near farms. During the breeding season they sing quite often, usually from a perch on a fencepost or telephone wire. From the front, they have a distinctive black "V" across their bright yellow chest; from the back, they are dappled browns and grays providing very effective camouflage as they forage amid the weeds and grasses in agricultural fields.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

The graceful Scissor-tailed Flycatcher is an unmistakable sight in grassland habitats throughout the south-central U.S. Look for these gray and subtly pink birds perched on wires and fences — the long, forked tail gives them a distinctive silhouette and makes them easy to identify. The lengthy tail of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, combined with its elongated wings, helps these birds snatch insects out of the air seemingly effortlessly. They are acrobatic in flight, making quick twists and turns as they chase after prey.



Northern Flicker



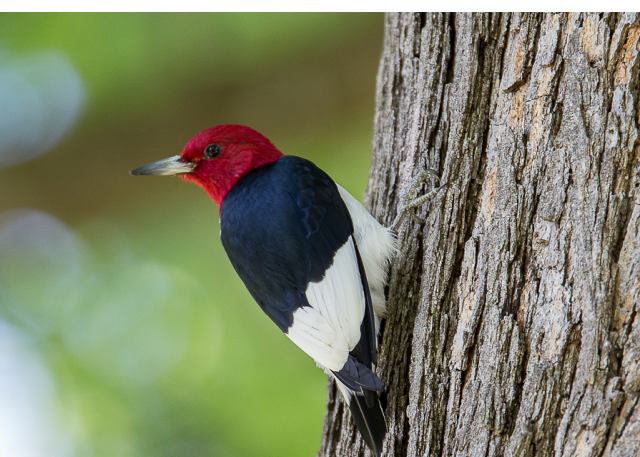
Northern Flickers are woodpeckers, but they often are spotted on the ground foraging for ants and beetles. Take a walk through woods or along forest edges and look for these large-bodied birds with slightly downcurved bills. A brown color overall, they also have black feathers that create a scalloped look, a black bib, a white patch on the rump visible in flight, and males possess red napes and black whiskers that look like a moustache. In flight, the shafts of their tail and wing feathers are bright yellow.

Ring-necked Pheasant

An introduced game bird native to Asia, Ring-necked Pheasants have established populations across the northern U.S. and thrive in agricultural areas. They often are spotted along roadsides as they scurry between patches of weedy vegetation. Males have distinctive red facial markings and a deep blue neck, while females are a mottled brown that provides excellent camouflage. They are omnivorous, eating seeds, grasses, and insects, and will frequent feeders stocked with sunflower seeds and cracked corn.



Red-headed Woodpecker



Red-headed Woodpeckers are sometimes called "flying checkerboards" because of the bold, blocky patterns shared by both males and females. Listen for their drumming sounds and loud, sharp calls in open woodlots near agricultural areas, in swamps, or in pine stands. Red-headed Woodpeckers sometimes catch flying insects "on the wing." They also cache (store) acorns and beech nuts in tree crevices and make occasional feeder visits for suet.



Birds of the Northwest

Bushtit



Bushtits are most commonly found in flocks that sometimes include other small songbirds like chickadees and warblers. While their dusty brown plumage might not make them stand out, these social birds are very active as they pass through vegetation and low branches foraging for insects, and flocks keep in near-constant contact using twittering calls. Maintaining backyard with plenty of native plants is one way to bring Bushtits to visit, though they are unlikely to stop at birdfeeders.

Black-billed Magpie

Black-billed Magpies are both noisy and eye-catching birds and are easy to spot perched high in trees, on fence posts, and on road signs in grassland and sagebrush habitats. Males and females are large with white and blue markings and have very long, diamond-shaped tails that trail behind them in flight. Black-billed Magpies are social and often gather in large flocks, using frequent whistling calls as they fly together. These birds make occasional visits to backyard feeders.



Mountain Chickadee



As their name suggests, Mountain Chickadees are found in evergreen forests in mountains in the Western U.S. These diminutive birds are commonly found foraging with other small bird species in high branches, where they can be spotted doing acrobatic moves, like hanging upside down to grab insects. Listen for their "chick-a-dee" call. Black oil sunflower seeds will bring Mountain Chickadees to feeders and in the colder months, suet and peanut butter are a great addition.

Varied Thrush

Varied Thrushes are shy birds that prefer dense forests. You are likely to hear this thrush's sweet song before you spot one of these handsome birds. Males and females have similar patterns of rusty orange and gray, but the coloring on the female is duller. In the summer, look for these stocky thrushes foraging for insects on the ground in small forest clearings. In the winter, they may visit feeders to eat seed from the ground, or to eat berries from native shrubs.



Lewis's Woodpecker



Look for the distinctive Lewis's Woodpecker in woodlands, pine forests, and burnt forests, but don't expect it to act like a typical woodpecker. This species feeds mostly by catching insects in midair and rarely probes into trees. While Lewis's Woodpeckers cling to trees in standard woodpecker fashion, they also perch on posts and branches, which is not a common woodpecker behavior. Provide habitat for woodpeckers by leaving dead trees standing when possible.



Birds of the Southwest

Pyrrhuloxia



Look for this gray and red relative of the Northern Cardinal in desert scrub habitats — the curved, stubby bill and longer crest of the Pyrrhuloxia can help to differentiate the two birds. Males and females are stocky and overall gray with red highlights on the crest, wings, and tail. Males also have a red stripe across the belly and on the face. Pyrrhuloxias are fond of seeds and of sunflower in particular, and may visit backyards to feed on the ground.

Gila Woodpecker

Gila Woodpeckers make their presence known in their desert habitats. They tend to be vocal, making frequent calls of rapid notes, and they are conspicuous on large saguaro cactuses. They excavate living cactuses for nests, which are later used by other bird species. Males and females are dusty brown with dramatic black-and-white stripes on the wings and tail, and males have a prominent red crown. Gila Woodpeckers primarily eat the fruits of saguaro cactus, berries, insects, and small vertebrates.



Greater Roadrunner



As you travel roads in low deserts and grasslands, keep an eye out for a large, slender bird with a very long tail darting by. Greater Roadrunners have long bills, black crests, and mottled brown plumage that provides cover in the desert shrubs. In the breeding season, the blue skin behind the eye can take on a reddish hue. When not running, Greater Roadrunners sometimes perch on rocks and fenceposts. Males have a mournful call that sounds similar to a Mourning Dove.

Gambel's Quail

Visit the arroyos (dry streambeds) of the southwest and you will likely see Gambel's Quails scurrying among cactuses and brush while foraging in large groups. Often, one quail will be the "lookout" on a post, shrub, or rock while the flock feeds on the ground. Both male and female Gambel's Quails have a fancy crest that bobs as they run around. Keeping sunflower seeds, millet, and cracked corn as well as a water source at ground level can help attract these sprightly desert dwelling birds.



Anna's Hummingbird



The eye-catching Anna's Hummingbird is commonly found in a variety of habitats from urban environments to desert and open woodlands. Both sexes are a beautiful, iridescent emerald green, and males have a bright fuchsia crown and neck. They use their long, thin bills to sip nectar from flowering plants like manzanita and gooseberry. Anna's Hummingbirds frequent birdfeeders in backyards along the Pacific Coast — look for them near large, colorful flowers!